

167
Brotherly Love Recommended

IN A

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

Ancient and Honourable SOCIETY

OF

Free and Accepted

M A S O N S,

IN

CHRIST-Church, BOSTON,

ON

Wednesday the 27th of December, 1749.

By *Charles Brockwell, A. M.*

His Majesty's Chaplain in Boston.

Published at the Request of the SOCIETY.

Ilud amicitiae sanctum ac venerabile nomen. Ovid.

In amicitiam coeant & fœdera jungant. Virg.

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M.DCC.L.

*In the GRAND LODGE,
Held at the Exchange Tavern in
BOSTON, on Wednesday the 27th
Day of December 1749.*

AGREED,

THAT the Thanks of this ANCIENT
and HONOURABLE SOCIETY be
given to our Brother the Reverend, Mr.
CHARLES BROCKWELL, for his SERMON
preached this Day before the said SOCIETY,
and that the Right Worshipful Brother
Hugh M^c Daniel, Brother *Henry Price*,
and Brother *Thomas Aston* request a Copy
of the same, to be printed by the SOCIETY.

Charles Pelham, Secretary.

To the Right Worshipful

THOMAS OXNARD, Esq;

Provincial Grand Master,

OF NORTH-AMERICA ;

Mr. *HUGH M^cDANIEL*,

Deputy Grand Master ;

Mr. *BENJAMIN HALLOWELL*,

Mr. *JOHN BOX*,

Grand Wardens ;

And OTHERS the Worshipful

BROTHERS and *FELLOWS*

OF THE

Ancient and Honourable SOCIETY

OF

Free and Accepted MASONS :

THIS SERMON,

Preached and Published at their Request, is

DEDICATED

By

Their most affectionate Brother,

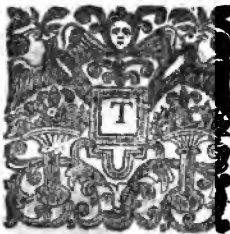
And humble Servant,

Charles Brockwell.



But as touching brotherly love, ye need not
that I write unto you ; for ye your selves
are taught of God to love one another.

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that I write unto you ; for ye your selves
are taught of God to love one another.*



THE principal intention in forming
societies is undoubtedly the uniting
men in the stricter bands of love ;
for men considered as social creatures,
must derive their happiness from each
other : Every man being designed
by Providence to promote the good
of others, as he tends his own advantage ; and by that
intercourse to secure their good offices, by being as occa-
sion may offer serviceable unto them.

But the Apostle in my text displays the necessity of brotherly love, from a far more noble principle than that of interest ; even from the inculcations of God, who *is love* : *For Ye your selves are taught by God to love one another*. We are engaged to imitate the love of God in Christ, in the Motive, Pattern, and Direction, to as high a degree, ~~as the vast distance and disproportion betwixt~~ him and us renders our nature and condition capable of attaining. Our obligations then of resembling God in this favourite attribute, should be incentives to our most earnest endeavours thereafter, should invigorate our love and charity by that irresistible influence his example should have over us, both in the Equity, Measure, and Extent of this duty ; in order whereunto my present design is

I. To enforce the practice of this communicative virtue, from those particular instances, wherein the love of Christ to Mankind, may, and ought to be imitated by us.

II. To lay before you the necessity of our following his example, from the consideration of his goodness towards us. And to

III. I shall close this discourse with some reflections suitable to the present Occasion.

And,

First, To enforce the practice of this communicative virtue, we must observe that our blessed Saviour's love towards mankind was open, generous, and free ; not the effect of any former engagement ; no, nor commenced upon prospect of any future advantage from the object of that love ; for, *bercin was love manifested, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*^b The meaning whereof is this ; that all the marvellous methods of Grace, all the great things done and suffered for us, by our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, were not in requital of any merit or desert in us ; but the motions of meer mercy and undeserved compassion.

His happiness could suffer no diminution by our misery, nor receive any addition from our rectitude. *Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself ? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous ? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect ?*^c No, but stupendous Goodness ! when we had deserved the severest of his vengeance, he rather chose to have his mercy glorified in our rescue, than his justice signalized in our destruction. And for this choice what reason can be assigned ? only his own exceeding goodness, and the incomprehensible greatness of his love ! *He would be gracious to whom he would be gracious ; and would shew mercy on whom he*

^b 1 John 4. 10. ^c Job 22. 2, 3.

would shew mercy. ^d And mercy triumphed over judgement, not because it was better for him, but because it was more profitable for us.

This was the nature of the affection itself, and herein we are to observe what an ensample our Lord hath set before us ; for, *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* ^e Moreover, *if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?* ^f This is close reasoning, and claimeth the attention of all men ; but more especially of Us, who challenge the inspired Author as the *Patron of our Society*...

The love and esteem we entertain for each other, must be neither sordid nor mercenary, but free and unconfined as the open and ambient air. We must *do good unto all men*, yet at the same time we are *obliged especially* to consider and have a due regard *to them who are of the house-hold of faith.* ^g Our benevolence as Men and Christians should be universal, shewing no respect of persons ; but then as Brothers joined in Society, if any distinction can be made, without prejudice to other men, we ought to be as favourable and beneficent as may be, to those of our own fraternity. Now, that what I have offered may not appear with any air of inconsistency, in regard to Religion or Charity, I must beg leave to observe to you,

^d Exod. 33. 19. ^e 1 John 4. 11. ^f Verse 20.

^g Gal. 6. 10.

that it is not only a rule almost without exception, generally practised by all men ; but even countenanced and warranted by, and from our Saviour's own example, whose love was equally extended to the benefit of every one of his Apostles or Disciples ; yet he gave more distinguishing marks of his affection to the Evangelist St. John, whose anniversary we this day commemorate, than to any other : *The disciple whom Jesus loved*^a occurring no less than five several times in the sacred pages, to distinguish him from the other Disciples.

Our love should terminate entirely in the party to whom it is born, without any, the least view or prospect of returning to our own future profit ; for such seeming love upon the minutest examination will prove a meer fiction, an empty sound, an ensnaring disguise ; because, with what pretences soever it may be varnished, SELF, DEAR SELF, is only at the bottom. *Do not even the publicans the same ?* This is driving a trade, or rather putting our good offices clandestinely out to interest ; which is in reality, not only the most ungenerous, but the most dangerous traffick in the world, as imposing upon mankind in the most tender point. This abases the noblest and bravest Virtues, prostitutes and profanes the sacred and venerable name of Friendship, causing a well-grounded suspicion, that this narrow principle, as predominant in our selves, is the master-spring of other men's actions ; so that consequently there are no such principles, as true generosity, disinterested friendship, or christian good-nature, subsisting among the sons of men.

^a John 13. 23. — 19. 26. — 20. 2. — 21. 7, 20.

ⁱ Mat. 5. 46.

Having thus far enforced the Practice of this communicative Virtue, I proceed .

II. To lay before you, the necessity of following his example, from the consideration of his goodness to us.

He is bountiful and kind from the essential goodness of his own nature, and because it is his most glorious attribute so to be. And as he is, beyond the utmost stretch of expectation liberal and munificent, tho' no additional happiness can accrue to him, from the poor impotent creatures that bask in the sunshine of his favours : so we, influenced by the force of so great an example, or incited by some inherent principle of christian perfection, should not sit down first, and compute what account our good intentions, kind offices, or *works and labours that proceedeth of Love* * to our indigent brothers, will turn to : but heedfully observe and pursue, those excellent rules of Generous compassion prescribed by our Great Master, and his Apostles. As Christ *having loved his own, loved them unto the end* ¹ ; not with sudden sallies of passion, but with a love unfeigned, issuing from that inexhaustible spring of goodness, which was ever flowing, ever diffusing itself, upon all who sought, or received its communications ; so should it be our constant endeavours to raise our affections to the constancy and perseverance, the sincerity and extent of his love. As St. John explains it, *not in word only, but in deed and*

* Heb. 6. 10. ¹ John 13. 1.

in tract ^m. Not growing hot or cold in our inclinations, according to the ebbings and flowings of uncertain fortune ; but proceeding upon the steady principles of Reason and Religion. Such as are always fixed and consistent with themselves, and if pursued as they ought to be, will not fail to make us *increase, and to abound in love one towards another,* ⁿ as in society particularly, so generally *toward all men.*

Christianity in the general (for I now enter not upon the melancholly divisions so rife among us) never circumscribes our benevolence within the narrow confines of Nature, Fortune, Profit, or Personal Obligation. What I would advance is this : That we restrain not our love to our next neighbour only, this being merely a point of conveniency—Nor to our acquaintance solely, this being the effect of inclination purely to gratify ourselves—We are not to caress our friends only, because gratitude and common justice require even that at our hands—Nor yet those especially from whom we expect to receive benefit, for this interest and policy will prompt us to — Nor our relations only, for this the ties of blood and meer nature dictate — Nor is our love and charity limited to them particularly who are of the same Church or Opinion with us : for by the very same reason that we are induced to believe ourselves in the right, they may imagine themselves so too ; and what we may judge to be a perfection among ourselves, they may condemn as a blemish. Be it so then : that in some points or rather

^m 1 John 3. 18. ⁿ 1 Theff. 3. 12.

modes of worship we may differ or dissent from each other : yet still the LODGE reconciles even these—There we all meet amicably, and converse sociably together—There we harmonize in principals, though we vary in punctilioes — There we join in conversation and intermingle interests — There we discover no estrangement of behaviour, nor alienation of affection — We serve one another most readily in all the kind Offices of a cordial Friendship. Thus are we united, tho' distinguished : united in the same *Grand Christian Fundamentals*, tho' distinguished by some *circumstantials* : united in one important band of *Brotherly Love*, tho' distinguished by some *Peculiarities of sentiment*.

Freedom of Opinion thus indulged, but its points never discussed, is the happy influence under which the unity of this truly *Ancient and Honourable Society* has been preserved, from time immemorial. And whoever is an *Upright Mason*, can neither be an Atheist, Deist, or Libertine. For he is under the strictest obligation to be a good man, a true Christian, and to act with honour and honesty, however distinguished by different opinions in the circumstantials of Religion. Upon which account MASONRY is become the Center of Union, and the means of conciliating friendship among men that might have otherwise remained at perpetual distance ; causing them to love as Brethren, as Heirs of the same hope, Partakers of the same promises, Children of the same God, and Candidates for the same Heaven.

But to return from this digression, into which the subject hath insensibly led me.

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The necessity of our following Christ's example, particularly in our love to each other : flows from the consideration of his goodness to us : in putting on bowels of Charity for the most miserable, the most despicable, the most negligent, the most mistaken, the most obstinate, the worst of men, the most implacable of enemies, nay, the most revengeful, that even thirsted after his blood— In all this Christ is our pattern, He died, and in the inexpressible agonies of a most painful and ignominious death, he prayed for those inexorable persons, who were Actors, and Causes, of this most tragic scene. And therefore from this illustrious example does the Apostle urge us, and moreover our own very *Constitution* teaches us, that *all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from us, with all malice. And that we be kind one to another.* ° We ourselves (besides these apostolic instructions) *being taught of God, to love one another.*

I have now gone through my two proposed heads of discourse, tho' not so fully as I might, as being willing to reserve the more useful reflections on the present Occasion—Which I beg leave particularly to Address to you, my *Right Worshipful* BROTHERS, at whose request I now stand here, and which I therefore hope will prove the more acceptable.

We read that when *Tertullus* pleaded against St. *Paul*, that the chief accusation whereon he founded his Plea,

° Eph. 4. 31, 32.

was, *his being ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes* ^p— and *this sect* (said the Jews) *we know that every where it is spoken against* ^q. And wherefore was this sect so spoken against ? Was it from any evil they knew of its professors ? Or from meer ignorance or blind prejudice ? We find nothing of the former, but undoubted proof of the latter. And this I take to be pretty much our case, in respect to *Masonry* — as flowing from the same corrupted principles. I have had the Honour of being a member of this Ancient and Honourable SOCIETY many Years, have sustained many of its offices, and can, and do aver, in this *sacred place*, and before the *Grand ARCHITECT of the World*, that I never could observe ought therein, but what was justifiable and commendable according to the strictest rules of Society. This being founded on the rules of the Gospel, the doing the Will of God, and *the subduing our passions*, and highly conducing to every sacred and social virtue. But not to insist on my own experiences, the very *Antiquity* of our *Constitution* furnishes a sufficient argument to confute all gainfayers. For no combination of wicked men, for a wicked purpose, ever lasted long. The want of virtue, on which mutual trust and confidence is founded, soon divides and breaks them to pieces. Nor would men of unquestionable wisdom, known integrity, strict honour, undoubted veracity, and good sense (tho' they might be trapped into a foolish or ridiculous society, which could pretend to nothing valuable) ever continue it, (as all the world may see they have

done, and now do) or contribute toward supporting and propagating it to posterity. —

As to any objections that have been raised against this society, they are as ridiculous as they are groundless : — For what can discover more egregious folly in any man, than to attempt to vilify what he knows nothing of ? At that rate, he may with equal justice abuse or calumniate any thing else that he is unacquainted with — But there are some peculiar customs among us ; surely these can be liable to no censure, hath not every Society some peculiarities, which are not to be revealed to men of different communities ? — But some among us behave not so well as might be expected : we fear this is too true, and are heartily sorry for it, let us therefore every one try to mend one : but even this objection is of no weight with a man of ingenuity and candour. For if the unworthiness of a professor, casts a reflection upon the profession, it may be inferred by parity of reason, that the misconduct of a christian, is an argument against christianity. But this is a conclusion which I presume no man will allow, and yet it is no more than what he must subscribe to, who is so unreasonable as to insist on the other.

Upon the whole then, it appears that the Rules of this society have a direct tendency to render Conversation agreeable, as well as innocent ; and so to influence our practice, as to be useful to others, and profitable to our selves ; for to continue in Amity, and maintain a fair correspondence, to be disposed reciprocally to all offices of humanity, and to act upon mutual terms of Benevolence, which are the Characteristics of Christianity, are

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likewise

likewise the Cement of this Society. And how Good it is to assist, Comfort, and Relieve the oppressed. I need not now observe. Nor is it less obvious, how pleasant it is to contribute to the innocent delight, and promote the lawful advantage of one another; and always to converse with security without any the least suspicion of fraudulent, injurious, or malicious practices.

Now in order to cherish and promote this harmony within doors and without; Let us first lay hold on the surest means to stop the mouth of detraction, by endeavouring to lead a pure and unblemished life. Let us consider my Brethren that not the reputation of one only but that of the whole Society is affected by a brother's misbehaviour. Invested as we are with that distinguishing BADGE, which at this Day is the Glory of the greatest Potentates upon earth, We should scorn to act beneath the dignity of our profession. Let us then walk worthy of our vocation, and do honour to our profession.

Let us rejoice in every opportunity of serving and obliging each other, for then and only then are we answering the great end of our institution. *Brotherly love, Relief and Truth*, oblige us not only to be compassionate and benevolent, but to administer that relief and comfort which the condition of any member requires, and we can bestow without manifest inconvenience to ourselves. No artful dissimulation of affection can ever be

allowed among those, who are upon a *Level*, nor can persons who live *within Compass*, act otherwise than *upon the Square* consistently with the Golden rule of *doing as they would be done by*. For among us every one is, or should be another self : so that he that hates another must necessarily abhor himself also : He that prejudices another, injures his own nature ; and he that doth not relieve a distressed Brother starves a member of his own body ; but then this relief is not to be bestow'd upon the idle, indolent, and extravagant ; but upon the unfortunate, industrious, successful brother.

Let us next remember the regulations of this *Society* are calculated not only for the prevention of enmity, wrath, and dissention ; but for the promotion of Love, Peace and Friendship ; then here surely conversation must be attended with mutual confidence, freedom, and complacency. He who neither contrives mischief against others, nor suspects any against himself, has his mind alway serene, and his affections compos'd. All the human Faculties rejoice in *Order, Harmony, and Proportion* ; by this our *Society* subsists, and upon this depends its *Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty*. Let therefore no narrow distinctions discompose this goodly *Frame* or disturb its *Symmetry*. But when good and worthy Men offer themselves, let them ever have the first place in our Esteem. But as for the abettors of Atheism, Irreligion, Libertinism, Infidelity, let us in the words of the prophet *shake our hands from them* just as a person would do, who hap-

pens to have burning-coals or some venomous creature fastening upon his flesh. In such a case none would stand a moment to consider ; none would debate with himself the expediency of the thing ; but instantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance ; instantly endeavour to disengage himself from the clinging mischief : so should every *upright Mason* from such perilous *false Brethren*.

There is one essential property which belongs to our *Craft*, which had like to have slipped me, and which, however condemned, is highly worthy of all applause ; and that is, *Secrecy*. All that should be disclosed of a Lodge is this, that in our meetings we are all good-natured, loving and cheerful one with another. But what are these secrets ? why, If a Brother in necessity seeks relief, 'tis an inviolable secret, because true *Charity vaunteth not itself*. ' If an overtaken Brother be admonished, 'tis in secret ; because *Charity is kind*. If possibly little differences, feuds, or animosities should invade our peaceful walls, they are still kept secret, for *Charity suffereth long, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil*. — These and many more (would time permit) which I could name, are the embellishments that emblazon the *Mason's Escutcheon*. And as a further ornament, let us add that aromatic *sprig of Cassia*, of *letting our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works ; and that whereas they speak against us as evil doers they may by our good works which they shall behold glorify God*.

2 Cor. 11. 26. 1 Cor. 13. 4. 1 Pet. 2. 12.

In order to which, *Lord we pray thee that thy grace may alway prevent and follow us and make us continually to be given to all good works through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, and God eternal, immortal, invisible, be Honour and Glory forever and ever. AMEN.*

F I N I S.

